

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
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R 041600Z MAR 77
FM AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0611
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BORDEAUX 0055

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: ELECTORAL SITUATION IN THE SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE

1. A RECENT PUBLIC OPINION POLL PUBLISHED IN LE POINT
GIVES THE LEFT 58 PERCENT OF THE INTENDED VOTE IN THE
SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE IN 1977. HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT A TRULY
NEW DEVELOPMENT GIVEN THE TRADITION OF R RADICALISM
AND SOCIALISM IN THIS REGION. ACCORDING TO THIS IFOP POLL,
THE SOCIALISTS SINCE 1973 HAVE INCREASED THEIR ELECTORAL
SUPPORT FROM 29 TO 39 PERCENT AND THE COMMUNISTS CAN COUNT ON
12 PERCENT OF THE REGIONAL ELECTORATE. IN 1973 AND 1974
THE LEFT REPRESENTED 48 TO 49 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. THE RPR
OR THE GAULLISTS CAN NOW DEPEND, ACCORDINGLY TO THIS POLL,
ONLY ON 20 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND THE GISCARDIENS AND THE
CENTRISTS APPROXIMATELY 19 PERCENT. WITH THE TILTING OF THE
GIRONDE DEPARTMENT TO THE LEFT IN THE 1976 CANTONAL ELECTIONS
AND THE 50/50 SITUATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE LANDES, THE
LEFT HAS IMPROVED ITS POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE REGION AND,
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ACCORDING TO THIS POLL, REPRESENTS A MAJORITY OF THE INTENDED
1977 VOTE IN ALL THE DEPARTMENTS EXCEPT THE PYRENEES-ATLANTIAUES
WHERE THE MAJORITY HAS A 51 PERCENT ADVANTAGE. (THE DEPARTMENTS
POLLED WERE THE DORDOGNE, GIRONDE, THE LANDES, LOT-ET-GARONNE,
PYRENEES-ATLANTIAUES, ARIEGE, AVEYRON, HAUTE-GARONNE, GERS,
LOT, HAUTE PYRENEES, TARN AND TARN-ET-GARONNE). IN TOTAL, THE
TOTAL REGION S INTENDED VOTE FIGURE IS 58 PERCENT FOR THE LEFT

AND 42 PERCENT FOR THE MAJORITY, AS COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 55 PERCENT FOR THE LEFT AND 45 PERCENT FOR THE MAJORITY.

2. DESPITE THE POLLS, THE MUNICIPAL ELECTORAL RACES THROUGHOUT THE SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE DEPEND VERY MUCH ON THE PARTICULAR SITUATION IN EACH MUNICIPALITY AND THE PERSONALITIES RUNNING FOR OFFICE. IN BORDEAUX, JACQUES CHABAN-DELMAS ANNOUNED HIS LIST AND NAMED JACQUES VALADE AS HIS DAUPHIN, THEREBY FORMALIZING A LONGTIME POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WHEREBY VALADE HAS BEEN THE ASSISTANT MAYOR OF BORDEAUX AND CHABAN'S MOST IMPORTANT LOCAL COLLABORATOR. IN NAMING VALADE, CHABAN-DELMAS MADE CLEAR THAT HE DOESN'T INTEND TO LEAVE THE POLITICAL SCENE AND THAT NO ONE HAS DIED BECAUSE HE HAS SIMPLY WRITTEN HIS WILL. CHABAN'S MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN RECOGNIZES THE CHALLENGE TO HIS LEADERSHIP LOCALLY. SPECIFICALLY, HE HAS BASED HIS ELECTORAL MANOEUVERING ON CONSOLIDATING THE MAJORITY POSITION IN THE GREATER BORDEAUX COMMUNITY. CHABAN DOES NOT FEEL HE RISKS DEFEAT IN THE ELECTORAL RACE IN BORDEAUX. H

HOWEVER, HE DOES REALIZE MORE THAN ANYONE THAT IF HE LOOSES TWO OF THE DISTRICTS IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY, THE LEFT WILL INDEED BECOME THE MAJORITY AND WILL BE ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY BLOCK CHABAN'S MANAGEMENT OF THE GREATER URBAN COMMUNITY. THIS IS WHY CHABAN CREATED THE GREATER BORDEAUX COUNCIL WHICH IS A NEW ADVISORY BODY TO DETERMINE THE MAJOR POLICY LINES FOR THE CITY. IT IS MORE A SYMBOLIC GESTURE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, BUT CHABAN WANTS TO FOCUS THE CAMPAIGN EFFORT ON WHERE HIS MAJORITY IS WEAKEST.

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3. ROLAND DUMAS'S UNION OF THE LEFT LIST HAS ALSO BEEN PUBLISHED WHICH INCLUDES 25 SOCIALISTS AND LEFTIST RADICALS, 11 COMMUNISTS AND 9 PERSONALITIES REPRESENTING DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF THE BORDEAUX POPULATION. IT IS INTERESTING THAT DUMAS, AS IS THE CASE FOR OTHER SOCIALIST LEADERS IN THE SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE, HAS BEEN OBLIGED TO ACCEPT MORE COMMUNISTS THAN HE WAS PREPARED TO DO SO AT THE ONSET OF THE CAMPAIGN. DUMAS, CONTRARY TO HIS STATEMENTS THAT HE WOULD NOT LAUNCH A PERSONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHABAN HAS, IN EFFECT, ALLOWED A RATHER DEFAMATORY POSTER CAMPAIGN IN BORDEAUX AGAINST CHABAN-DELMAS. POSTERS HAVE BEEN PUT UP ALL OVER BORDEAUX ATTACKING CHABAN'S ALLEGED PREOCCUPATION WITH HIS OWN IMAGE RATHER THAN THE IMAGE OF BORDEAUX, THAT BORDEAUX IS THE MOST HIGHLY TAXED CITY IN FRANCE, AND THAT CHABAN IS EXTREMELY WELL HOUSED IN CONTRAST TO THE MAJORITY OF THE BORDELAIS, ETCM CHABAN IS ANNOYED BY THE PERSONAL TONE OF THE LEFTIST CAMPAIGN AND HAS OPENLY CALLED FOR ITS CESSATION, WHICH, HE SAID, DOES NOTHING BUT DIRTY UP THE CITY. IN CHABAN'S VIEW DUMAS HAS BEEN

OBLIGED TO RESORT TO THESE TACTICS BECAUSE HE HAS REALIZED THAT THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES ARE NOT OVERWHELMINGLY IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO GIVE THE UNITED-LEFT LIST AN EDGE IN THE ELECTIONS. THE SPECIFIC CASES OF THE BANKRUPTCY OF CERTAIN FIRMS AND THE RESULTANT UNEMPLOYMENT ARE NOT THAT GENERALIZED TO GIVE THE SOCIALISTS THE PUSH THEY NEED, IN HIS VIEW. IN ANY CASE, THE CAMPAIGN IS NOW WELL LAUNCHED AND THE REAL BATTLE WILL BE PLAYED OUT IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY ITSELF RATHER THAN BORDEAUX PROPER.

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4. IN A RATHER PREDICTABLE RACE IN PERIGUEUX, YVES GUENA, THE RPR DEPUTY/MAYOR AND JACQUES CHIRAC'S DEPUTY IN THE RPR, IS FAIRLY CONFIDENT OF SUCCESS AND WILL BE FACING A LEFTIST LIST HEADED BY THE COMMUNIST ROGER GORSE. GUENA IS BETTING ON HIS PAST ADMINISTRATION OF PERIGUEUX AND IS FAVORED TO WIN. HOWEVER, FOR THE FIRST TIME THE LEFT IS PRESENTING A UNITED-LEFT LIST WITH 14 COMMUNIST MEMBERS, 8 SOCIALISTS AND 4 LEFTIST RADICALS, WITH 5 INDEPENDENT PERSONALITIES. ROGER GORSE, IS THE FEDERAL SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND A RAILROAD WORKER WHO HAS MADE HIS WAY UP THE POLITICAL LADDER THROUGH THE TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT. THE ONLY PROBLEM THAT GUENA HAS IS THE THREAT OF A THIRD LIST WHICH MIGHT DIVIDE THE MAJORITY.

5. IN LA ROCHELLE, THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE MRG, MICHEL

CREPEAU, WHO IS THE DEPUTY/MAYOR OF THAT CITY, HAS HAD SOME DIFFICULTY IN PUTTING TOGETHER A LIST WHICH APEASES HIS SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST ALLIES. HE HAS ON HIS LIST 10 LEFTIST RADICALS, 13 SOCIALISTS AND 11 COMMUNISTS WITH 3 PERSONALITIES UNCLASSIFIED

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WITHOUT POLITICAL AFFILIATION. HE WILL FACE FRANCE S DE ST AFFRIQUE WHO IS IN THE INSURANCE AND BANKING BUSINESS AND THE GRANDSON OF A FORMER MAYOR OF LA ROCHELLE. ST AFFRIQUE S LIST WILL INCLUDE INDEPENDANT REPUBLICANS AND RPR MEMBERS IN ADDITION TO 8 POLITICAL PERSONALITIES. CREPEAU HAS CAREFULLY CULTIVATED THE LOCAL ELECTORATE AND HAS DONE MUCH TO BEAUTIFY LA ROCHELLE AND TO ASSURE ITS ECONOMIC STABILITY IN THE FACE OF MANY PROBLEMS. HE IS A POPULAR MAYOR AND AN ACTIVIST AND WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DEFEAT. IN FACT, LA ROCHELLE HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND MOST AGREEABLE CITIES TO LIVE IN IN FRANCE, LARGELY BECAUSE OF HIS EFFORTS. ST AFFRIQUE'S CAMPAIGN WILL BE BASED ON ATTACKING CREPEAU S ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS AND THE "COLLECTIVITS", HE WILL TRY TO GAIN THE VOTE OF THE MIDDLE-CLASS, THE INDUSTRIALISTS AND THE COMMERCIAL CLASS OF THE CITY. HE WILL ALSO POINT OUT THAT MUCH MORE INDUSTRIALIZATION CAN TAKE PLACE, IF THE PROPER INDUCEMENTS ARE GIVEN IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. HE DOES NOT THINK THIS WILL BE POSSIBLE UNDER A LEFTIST ADMINISTRATION. CREPEAU HIMSELF IS OFFERING THE ROCHELAIS A "MUNICIPAL CONTRACT" IN THE ECONOMIC/SOCIAL AND URBAN SECTORS.DJEREJIAN

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